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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Eleventh session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 43rd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 30 November 1994, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. ALSTON

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS (agenda item 4) (continued)

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT

Dominican Republic

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mrs. Bonetti Herrera and Mrs. Polanco (Dominican Republic) took places at the Committee table.

2. The CHAIRPERSON, having welcomed the delegation of the Dominican Republic, recalled that the Committee had first considered the situation in the Dominican Republic at its fifth session. Its particular concern was the situation in regard to allegations of forced evictions. At that stage the Committee had suggested that it might be useful for one or two of its members to be invited to the Dominican Republic, not to investigate but merely to hold a more effective dialogue with the Government. That request had been endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in 1991 and again the following year. Subsequently, the Committee had sent requests to the Government for specific additional information relating to the issues raised, and the matter was again scheduled for consideration at the Committee's tenth session. At that session the Committee had agreed to a request from the Government to postpone consideration of the matter on the understanding that an expert from the capital would appear before the Committee at its present session.

3. The Committee had drawn the attention of the State party to the information submitted to it by a non-governmental organization (NGO) during its tenth session. That information had been made available to the Government, and the Committee had invited the Government to address the matters identified in its presentation to the present session. The Committee had also urged the Government to take all appropriate measures in the meantime to ensure full respect for all economic, social and cultural rights and, in particular, in relation to the right to housing.

4. He noted that a second periodic report had just been received from the Government of the Dominican Republic. However, it still required to be translated and the Working Group would have to draw up a list of issues on it; it was therefore not before the Committee at the current session. The Committee should therefore focus on specific issues with respect to article 11 and in particular the right to adequate housing.

5. Mrs. POLANCO (Dominican Republic) expressed her Government's gratitude to the Committee for having agreed to postpone its discussions with the Dominican Republic at the previous session.

6. The Dominican Republic was a developing country with a population of some 7 million persons, 60 per cent of whom lived in towns. It had suffered from a dictatorship lasting 30 years and from a cruel civil war; but democracy had been restored and the country was now striving for development in all

spheres. Despite the poverty caused by its huge external debt, since 1986 the Dominican Republic had been building homes, schools and hospitals to improve the lot of its people.

7. With regard to the allegations concerning forced evictions in the Dominican Republic, she said that between 1986 and 1993 there had been some 24,000 forced evictions and according to official statistics 26,900 housing units had been built. It was true that apartments that should have been given to evicted persons had gone to others. However, the situation was improving, as was recognized in the document issued in November 1994 by the non-governmental organization HABITAT, with which her delegation had had a meeting in Geneva and at which she had agreed to convey HABITAT's requests concerning those allegations to her Government. Her Government's desire to improve matters was evidenced by the fact that despite the country's difficult financial situation she had been sent to Geneva in order to appear before the Committee.

8. The Government had been unable to comply with the Committee's requests concerning reporting because of the difficult situation it had faced, but it now hoped to rectify that state of affairs, perhaps with some technical assistance. She was now prepared to answer any questions put by the members of the Committee.

9. The allegation made in the report submitted to the Committee in November 1994 by an NGO, COPADEBA Ciudad Alternativas, that 3,000 evicted families were still waiting to be relocated in new housing while many apartments built for them had been allotted to other families who were not homeless was unfortunately true. In the past, apartments specifically built for evicted persons had been given to the political friends of those responsible for allocating housing units. However, local housing coordination organizations headed by priests had now been set up and matters had been largely corrected. Individuals were able to complain to the President about discrepancies in the allocation of apartments and steps were then taken to ensure that the apartments were given to the right people.

10. Mr. SIMMA asked how many of the 3,000 families in Villa Juana, Villa Consuelo, Los Frailes, San Carlos, Guachupita, La Fuente, Zona Colonial, Maquiteria, Cristo Rey, La Cuarenta, Los Rios and La Zurza had been adequately resettled.

11. Mrs. POLANCO (Dominican Republic) replied that according to the official figures, in Maquiteria where 734 persons had been evicted, 668 had been rehoused in the first stage, and then in the second stage all the 195 persons evicted had been rehoused. In Faro a Colon, out of 343 evicted persons, 288 had already been rehoused. She had no details about the situation in Zona Colonial.

12. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO, having thanked the representative of the Dominican Republic for her frankness in responding to the Committee's questions, asked what criteria were used in allocating housing. Was account taken of a family's economic position? She understood from an NGO that some

70 per cent of the evicted families were headed by women. What measures were taken for evicted people moved away from their place of work, and for children? Was accessible housing provided for elderly people?

13. Mr. ALVAREZ VITA asked whether Zona Colonial was a historic centre being redeveloped.

14. He also wished to know whether there was a plan to build housing for evicted persons before their eviction, not only in Zona Colonial but elsewhere.

15. Mr. WIMER ZAMBRANO said that so far the discussion had centred on emergency re-housing; he would like details of the Government's general housing policy.

16. Mrs. BONOAN-DANDAN said that she found it odd that representatives of HABITAT had to come to Geneva to see a representative of the Government. Did the Government of the Dominican Republic not sit down with NGOs at home? On the points raised by Mrs. Jimenez Butragueño and Mr. Wimer Zambrano, she asked what the usual procedure in evictions was, whether advance notice of eviction was given, if so how long it was, whether tenants were told to look for alternative accommodation or promised it.

17. Mr. TEXIER said that the Committee had long been concerned that when Governments carried out urban renewal programmes certain conditions should be met, including prior re-housing to allow people to carry on their lives normally.

18. As far as consultations between the Government of the Dominican Republic and local communities were concerned, it did seem that some progress had been made through the organization of neighbourhood associations supported by priests. Clearly, however, there were still many subjects of concern to be addressed. He would also like to have details of the Government's medium and long-term housing policy and of how funds were distributed, since it seemed that a much larger proportion of the housing budget was spent on superior housing rather than on public housing.

19. The NGO report stated that 1,638 evicted families had still not been rehoused, some having been homeless since 1987. Did the Government have a re-housing plan?

20. The representative of the Dominican Republic had said that some housing units which were normally intended for evicted persons had been given to others because of undue influence. What did the Government intend to do to rectify that situation in future?

21. The neighbourhoods from which evictions were made were relatively central ones whereas the alternative accommodation provided was in the suburbs or outside towns. Did the new neighbourhoods have adequate water, sewerage, etc.?

22. Mrs. VYSOKAJOVA asked whether the Government guaranteed the provision of adequate housing for each evicted family and whether the right to adequate housing was included in the legal system of the Dominican Republic.

23. Mr. GRISSA said that he appreciated the dilemma faced by the Government of the Dominican Republic with regard to evictions, but he had doubts about its long-term planning. A massive monument to Colombus had been completed in the 1980s on an area of 417 hectares. The suffering of the persons evicted from that area did no honour to Colombus, and it was surprising that a poor country like the Dominican Republic should sacrifice so much of its resources to build such a monument.

24. Mrs. POLANCO (Dominican Republic) explained that, under article 8 of her country's Constitution, the State had a duty to promote public loans on favourable terms so that all Dominicans could have a comfortable and hygienic home. The housing shortage amounted to more than 500,000 units. Construction projects had been initiated to replace high-risk dwellings by more comfortable ones. Under the procedure followed by the Government, when a sector was declared to be of high risk or was needed for urban development purposes such as the construction of streets, hospitals or churches, a census was taken of the persons living in it. The matter was then passed on to the National Property Office. At first, the procedure used had been totally mistaken because persons had been evicted without any alternative housing being provided for them or had been removed to distant places where they were separated from their communities. In recent evictions, however, new accommodation had already been built for the persons evicted. Technical cooperation in that connection would be helpful.

25. In the first stage of the evictions, tenants had been provided with a dwelling and owners had been compensated by payments based on the assessed value of their property. Owners had considered the arrangement to be unfair and recently they, too, had received a dwelling, making a down payment equal to the value of their property. The budget for the re-housing operation was very large, and the State received very little in return, since the down payments obtained did not compensate for the expenditure incurred. However, no debt had been created.

26. All the sectors involved were organized through NGOs, usually led by priests, who followed up developments until the evicted persons had been re-housed. The practice of sending evicted persons to places lacking the necessary services was disappearing, being replaced by a system under which persons were moved from one dwelling to another.

27. The commitment to build a monument to Colombus to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America had been entered into, perhaps mistakenly, by all member States at the fifth conference of the Organization of American States. The Dominican Republic had thus had an international commitment to build one, although the cost to the country had been very high. The land on which the monument had been built had formerly been an inhospitable slum area, 90 per cent of whose inhabitants now lived in comfortable dwellings with water and electricity.

28. Mr. GRISSA commented that it was hard to accept that the living should be made to pay the cost of raising a monument in honour of a dead man under what was called "an international commitment". It was also difficult to understand why evicted persons should protest if they had in fact been adequately re-housed.

29. Mr. SIMMA thanked the representative of the Dominican Republic for her frankness concerning the problem of forced evictions. He was glad to learn that measures were being taken to improve the situation. The information given was, however, vague. The Committee needed to have details on cases such as that of the 106 families living under a bridge, who should have been re-housed by now.

30. Mrs. POLANCO (Dominican Republic) said that there had been no evictions in Zona Colonial and improvements had been made there. The Government had offered new housing to inhabitants of high-risk areas lacking adequate sanitation. Evictions had taken place because of urban development. The Government recognized that in the past excessive force had been used by the military in carrying out arbitrary evictions in which priorities had not been taken into account. Nevertheless, the situation had been improved.

31. The Government had close ties to NGOs in the Dominican Republic, which had requested a meeting. It had been very moving to meet fellow citizens outside the Dominican Republic, where problems could be viewed in a different light. The meeting had provided an occasion for a useful exchange of information.

32. Much had been done to assist the elderly, for whom special institutions existed. She was not in a position to state whether or not ground floor dwellings were allotted to them, but the point was very valid and she would convey the Committee's concern regarding it to her Government.

33. Mr. WIMER ZAMBRANO requested some information on the general direction of housing policy, since it was not enough to have information only on emergency situations like evictions.

34. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO asked whether measures had been taken to prevent privileged persons who were not really in dire need of housing from taking advantage of housing built for the homeless.

35. Mr. TEXIER noted that so far the Committee had been concerned with the past. It seemed that some evicted persons had still not been re-housed, that others persons might be threatened with eviction, and that there was a chronic housing shortage. He would now like to have some assurances as to the future. For example, how would certain decrees such as Decree No. 359-91 be implemented, would agreements allowing for alternative solutions be reached with the persons concerned, who appeared to be organized around priests or NGOs, and would the militarization of districts be avoided when evictions took place? In any case, there was a need to formulate programmes to reduce the housing shortage and improve eviction proceedings and to consult the persons affected. It would also be necessary to ensure that the new districts in which evicted persons were to be housed were supplied with water, electricity and sewerage.

36. Mr. ALVAREZ VITA asked whether alternative housing was built before evictions took place, with access to roads, telephones, schools, health centres and other facilities which had been available to evicted persons in their previous places of residence. That appeared not to be the case in certain townships. In some instances only part of the evicted population had been re-housed elsewhere. He would also like to know why certain districts were militarized.

37. Mrs. VYSOKAJOVA asked what the total national housing deficit was.

38. Mr. SIMMA said that he did not consider that his question had been answered. Also he wished to know what legal basis there was for the militarization of residential areas, under which strange things could happen, and whether presidential decrees were subject to any form of control.

39. Mrs. BONOAN-DANDAN said that in her previous statement she had not been referring to the fact that the Government had held a meeting with NGOs from the Dominican Republic but to the fact that the meeting had taken place in Geneva. She asked what authorities were responsible for deciding upon and enforcing evictions. In any case it was not good to remove people to places far away from their work and community. Some information on the Government's medium- and short-term plans would be appreciated. The Government was doing a great deal of building, and it was necessary to know what measures it had taken to deal with the thousands of persons who would be affected by its construction projects.

40. Mrs. POLANCO (Dominican Republic) said that the evictions envisaged under Decrees Nos. 358-91 and 359-91 of 1991 had not been carried out because the Government's policy of conducting a house-by-house census and of not evicting anyone until replacement housing had been found had come into effect at that point. Under the same decrees, members of the Navy were to watch those sectors that had been targeted for eviction in order to avoid more people putting up shacks where they knew there would be new housing. If the soldiers were charging "tolls" to allow people to bring home improvement materials or electrical appliances into their homes, that constituted a distortion of the decrees. The sectors concerned, such as La Ciénaga, were in any event swampy high-risk areas. Given that a visitor's first view of Santo Domingo was of a large number of slums and hovels built by river banks, the Government's policy was to clean up the city and to provide people with new, adequate housing. On its return to the capital, the delegation would request suspension of the decrees as soon as possible. Cooperation with the civilian population would be permanent, as laid out in Decree No. 76-94, which called for the creation of a Commission on evictions, housing and construction, comprising in the first place representatives of civil society, so that their opinions would be taken into account in any developments, evictions, relocations or granting of housing. The courts did not dictate eviction orders. Presidential decrees were made in the interests of society or because they were necessary for the safety of the people to be evicted. Formerly, that had had disagreeable consequences, but now with its house-by-house policy, the Government was determining which people would be evicted and ensuring that they were not evicted until new housing was available. The horizonal growth of the city had indeed caused a shortage of many basic services, but it was the policy that the relocation sites for evicted populations must also have such basic

services as pharmacies, clinics and schools. The housing shortage was abating slowly, as only 26,500 units had been built so far, some at a slower pace than others. The 1987 construction budget for 50 units had risen by 1991 from 50,000 to 200,000 pesos, which had caused a slow down in the pace of building. The inhabitants of the 13 barrios targeted by Decrees Nos. 358-91 and 359-91 had not yet been evicted. In any case, those decrees had not yet been carried out because of the policy of first relocating the inhabitants of the units concerned. As to the military presence in certain slum areas, the Navy was there to ensure that no new housing was built, where censuses had already been conducted, as many people were putting up shacks in order to ensure that they would later be provided with new housing to rent or sell. People were not being allowed to bring in materials for improving existing housing because if such improvements were carried out, when they were relocated the inhabitants would then request housing of a much greater value. The decrees would, however, be suspended and residents of the targeted areas involved in cooperation with the civilian population to find a way to improve their situation.

41. Mr. GRISSA said that the Dominican Republic had a relatively fast-growing population; many people were moving to Santo Domingo, with resultant pressure on the existing slums. Did that not mean that new slums were being developed elsewhere, on the outskirts of the capital, to accommodate those migrants? If they could not build housing in the newly-protected areas, what were they to do?

42. Mr. SIMMA said that although the practice whereby residents resorted to bribery of military personnel in order to bring electrical appliances into their homes appeared to be a thing of the past, it was not acceptable. Was it really true that the Navy's real function was to see that the Government's housing policy was being carried out? In future, should a legitimate role in housing policy be given to the military?

43. Mr. ALVAREZ VITA asked if the statistics provided in the report of May 1994 by the NGO COPADEBA Ciudad Alternativa according to which 10,000 families in La Ciénaga and Los Guandules had been evicted, were incorrect, given that the representative of the Dominican Republic had asserted that no one was being evicted without being allocated new housing. He did not understand the reason for activities by military personnel. Was it to prevent residents from bringing construction materials into dangerous zones? Were they not also prevented from bringing electrical appliances into their homes, even though they still lived there? The representative had stated that the decrees would be suspended when the delegation arrived back in Santo Domingo and requested it. Did she have to come to Geneva in order for the Government to take action?

44. Mrs. POLANCO (Dominican Republic) said that almost all the barrios in which the Navy was present were located in military zones. The activities conducted by the military were aimed at preventing more people from moving into those zones which were in general swampy, high-risk areas, putting up shacks and asking for housing of even greater value. She herself would not be requesting the Government to suspend the decrees: the Government would certainly wish to comply with the requests made by the Committee in its concluding observations, and she had assumed that the suspension of the

decrees would be one of them. Regarding the socio-economic impact of the evictions, she said that those people generally came from rural areas and moved frequently, setting up house somewhere and then moving on. There were no restrictions on the freedom of movement of the population, either to the cities or to the countryside. The government policy also applied to the interior of the country. The population was growing at a rate of 2.5 per cent a year and was very young, with the majority aged between 18 and 59 years. The life expectancy for men was 64 years; for women, 68 years.

45. Mr. GRISSA said that if the population was growing at that rate, the slums must be growing at that rate as well. If the Government was freezing further development in the slum areas, how were those areas then expanding and what was the Government doing to cope?

46. Mr. TEXIER referred to Decree No. 76-94 concerning the urban renewal of marginalized areas on the banks of the rivers Isabela and Osama. That plan was affecting the northern zone of the city in particular. Did it include building a peripheral boulevard? The number of evictions would then vary considerably, depending on where the boulevard was sited. Was it not possible to include representatives of the public such as community representatives, in the commission being established, either officially or in practice? He noted that the delegation had not yet responded to the reliable, well-documented information provided by the NGO.

47. Mrs. POLANCO (Dominican Republic) said that the decrees in question called for representatives of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and community representatives, to participate actively in the formulation of the relevant plans, and called for that cooperation between civil society and the Government to be institutionalized.

48. Mr. ALVAREZ VITA asked if the representative agreed with the statistical information provided on the evicted population in table 2 of the report by COPADEBA dated November 1994.

49. Mrs. POLANCO (Dominican Republic) said that she had the organization's November 1994 report but not the report of May 1994.

50. The CHAIRPERSON, speaking on a point of clarification, said that the May report had been officially presented to the Government and that the Committee had asked the Government to respond specifically to it, so there was no question of it having been unavailable to the Government. The November 1994 report had also been made available.

51. Mrs. POLANCO (Dominican Republic) said that according to Government data, of the 12,019 evicted families, only 850 had still not been housed. In Hoyo de Chulín, a project was underway to build housing for evicted persons. In Los Guandules and La Ciénaga, the 13,124 families referred to in the NGO report had not yet been evicted, but would be in the future. Only 383 families had been evicted, and 3,000 housing units had already been completed.

52. In all, between 25,000 and 26,000 families had been evicted from Santo Domingo, but according to her information, more than 19,000 dwellings had been built for them. Efforts had been made throughout the country to dissuade people from moving to the capital. She would attempt to verify the figure of 868 evicted families in Hoyo de Chulín, to which the NGO report had referred, and would include that information in a new report to be drawn up for the Committee.

53. She reiterated that her delegation had not received the May 1994 report by COPADEBA; a complete reply to its allegations would be produced and made available to the Committee.

54. Mr. TEXIER sought further clarification on Decree No. 74-1994, which did not seem to take the civil population sufficiently into account. Article 4 of the decree made mention of a national commission of urban affairs, which appeared to be made up solely of State bodies, and he wondered whether it would not be possible to include representatives of the public in the commission. He also inquired about the housing conditions of Haitians living in exile in the Dominican Republic.

55. Mrs. POLANCO (Dominican Republic) said that Mr. Texier's suggestion to include members of the public in the national commission of urban affairs was a good one.

56. Mr. GRISSA asked whether new housing was being built in the Dominican Republic faster than the population was growing, what the future population growth projections were and whether financial and other policies assisted lower income groups in obtaining access to housing.

57. Mr. SIMMA asked what the position was of the Dominican Republic on the Committee's offer to visit the country and engage in dialogue on the housing problem with the Government and non-governmental institutions. Noting that forced evictions had not been limited to Santo Domingo, but had also taken place in a number of other areas, he asked whether the Dominican Republic regarded the provision of adequate housing as a right and whether that right was recognized in the Constitution or domestic legislation. He also inquired what period of notice was given to persons threatened with eviction and whether families were informed prior to eviction that they would need to pay for new dwellings provided to them.

58. Mrs. BONOAN-DANDAN sought clarification on how the eviction procedure worked, whether it was a matter for the courts and whether a special authority was also involved. She also inquired what the Government did about families evicted in connection with road-construction projects and whether the Government had taken steps to enshrine the right to housing in domestic law.

59. Mrs. VYSOKAJOVA requested data on what percentage of the population was living below the poverty line.

60. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO asked how housing units were allocated, whether cases of fraudulent allocations had come to light and what was being done to combat that phenomenon and to ensure that those who obtained housing were entitled to it.

61. Concerning children, she had heard that there was a crime problem, and she therefore wondered what was being undertaken to fight neighbourhood crime and to ensure that children attended school.

62. The CHAIRPERSON thanked the delegation of the Dominican Republic and said that the Committee looked forward to its replies to the questions posed by the members.

63. Mrs. Bonetti Herrera and Mrs. Polanco (Dominican Republic) withdrew.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (agenda item 2) (continued)

64. The CHAIRPERSON said that he had just received a fax from the Permanent Mission of Suriname in New York stating that financial constraints prevented the representative from presenting the report. Suriname was one of four countries that had never reported, despite having ratified the Covenant in 1976. The Committee had decided in 1992 to examine the situation in the absence of a report, but a report had then been received. In his view, there seemed to be no option but to proceed with a consideration of Suriname. It would be up to the country rapporteur to draw up concluding observations based on all available information.

65. If there was no objection, he would take it that members wished the Committee to proceed on that basis and to consider draft concluding observations the following week.

66. It was so decided.

67. Mr. TIKHONOV (Secretary of the Committee) said that in a note verbale dated 29 November 1994, the Permanent Mission of Panama had requested the Committee to postpone until the twelfth session its consideration of Panama, in particular questions concerning the right to housing, and had referred in that connection to the recent change of Government in Panama and the new Government's desire to reply fully to the Committee in the light of its new social development policy, which had had an impact in the housing sector.

68. The CHAIRPERSON said that the new Permanent Representative of Panama had spoken earlier that morning to the Secretary of the Committee and had indicated that Panama might well respond favourably to the Committee's proposal to send one or two of its members to visit that country.

69. The CHAIRPERSON asked for suggestions on how to proceed in response to Panama's note verbale.

70. Mr. GRISSA said that the Committee had its rules and it should comply with them: it should not postpone consideration of Panama's implementation of the Covenant.

71. Mr. TEXIER asked whether Panama had already requested a postponement at the May session. If so, the Committee should consider Panama at the current session. He had in his possession a letter dated 20 January 1994 in which Panama rejected, without any explanation, the Committee's request to visit the country.

72. The CHAIRPERSON recalled that at its tenth session in May 1994, the delegation of Panama had provided the Committee with a large quantity of written information, but that the Committee had not considered that all its concerns had been addressed, and it had noted in its decision that the Government of Panama had undertaken to provide the Committee with more complete information on the issues identified with respect to the right to housing, that such information would be presented to the Committee by experts in the field of housing, that Panama would respond in its written replies to the issues identified in the report on cases of forcible evictions from 1992 to April 1994 submitted to the Committee during its tenth session by the National Commission for Human Rights in Panama (CONADEHUPA) and that it would continue its dialogue with Panama with respect to its implementation of the right to housing.

73. He asked whether the Committee attached importance to sending a mission as a way of establishing a precedent.

74. Mr. WIMER ZAMBRANO underscored the need to establish such a precedent for future situations.

75. The Committee's relations with the former Government of Panama had not been good. The change of government in Panama had brought with it a change in its attitude towards the Committee. The difficulty that the Committee had experienced had been with the former Government. Unlike the previous Government, the new Government had been fairly elected. Any decision that the Committee took must bear those facts in mind.

76. Mr. SIMMA agreed with Mr. Wimer Zambrano. The Committee should reaffirm its desire to visit Panama.

77. Mr. GRISSA said that the Committee could not apply different rules to different countries. The case of Panama had been postponed for some time. The Committee could not defer consideration whenever a Government more favourably disposed to it came to power.

78. The CHAIRPERSON said that it might be appropriate to inform the Permament Representative that the Committee attached great importance to a mission to Panama.

79. Mr. ALVAREZ VITA said that the Committee should respond to the note verbale by informing the Government of Panama that it would proceed with its consideration of the housing situation in Panama as agreed but that that did not prevent the delegation of Panama from presenting comments on the Committee's report. The Committee should reiterate its wish to visit Panama, which would enhance its prestige and would respond to the concerns raised by

Mr. Grissa and the need to address the question carefully, as pointed out by Mr. Wimer Zambrano. The new Government of Panama would not want to defend the measures of the previous Government and might even want to endorse any approach that the Committee adopted. That would be of benefit to all: to the Committee, to the population concerned and to the new Government of Panama.

80. Mr. SIMMA agreed with Mr. Grissa, but said that Panama was not the case of a Government that had not reported on time; at issue was a long follow-up to a report. Therefore, while the Committee should always apply the same rules, it might modify them to take into account the needs of the particular case.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.